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2/19/80
2005 FADRL
February 19, 1980

Dear Mr. Wydler:

Thank you for your letter of February 5, on behalf of a constituent, concerning the situation of disappeared persons in Argentina.

We remain deeply concerned over violations of basic human rights in Argentina. While the level of violations diminished last year, serious problems still remain.

The most fully documented compilation of disappearances contains the names of 6,500 persons whose whereabouts are unknown. Disappearances continue, although the rate of disappearances has fallen off from several thousand in 1976 to approximately 40 for January-November 1979. There are still reports of torture being used during the interrogation process. The right of option program, allowing prisoners to leave Argentina for other countries, has been slowed by Argentine bureaucratic procedures. Some improvements have been noted, however, in judicial autonomy and prison conditions, and the number of political prisoners held under state-of-siege provision has been reduced from 3,500 in 1978 to approximately 1,300 as of December 1979. The 1979 human rights report, submitted to the Congress in January, contains a full and balanced account of the human rights situation.

As a result of Argentina's human rights record, it has been United States policy to oppose loans to Argentina in the multilateral banks which do not satisfy basic human needs criteria. The Kennedy-Humphrey Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act proscribes our supplier role for equipment and training to the Argentine Armed Forces. Further actions toward Argentina will be consistent with this policy and legislation until there is a return to respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Sincerely,

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): _____

Declassify: () In Part () In Full

() Classify as _____ () Extend as _____ () Downgrade to _____

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

J. Brian Atwood
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

The Honorable

John W. Wydler,

House of Representatives.

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Clearances:ARA/ECA:CWRuser

ARA:RKohn

HA:PFlood (subs)

H:ETaylor